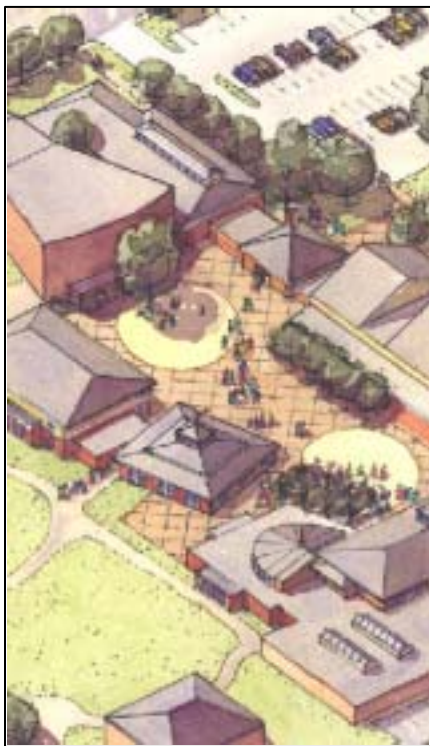


New Designs for Washington School for the Deaf



Learning Plan

Completed:
August, 2001

*“Serving Deaf & Hard of Hearing Learners, Families and
Communities in the State of Washington”*

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Acknowledgements

Washington School for the Deaf

The Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) is unique in the State of Washington for providing an education in an environment that uses direct communication for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing and through the use of American Sign Language (ASL), which is typically unavailable to these learners in other learning settings. Learners at WSD also experience the sense of involvement in their learning, extra-curricular activities, and a sense of history and culture of the Deaf community that are most often not made available in their home communities or school districts.

WSD is committed to being the lead agency in Washington that explores, tests and uses innovative, assisted hearing technologies that are developed for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing population. Through the Outreach and Community Services Programs, these technologies will be made available for use in the public schools, community colleges, and universities in Washington. The education and services provided by WSD prepare Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners to be self-reliant, and to contribute in life and career activities rather than to need continuing assistance from the State and their communities.

Facilities Planning Team

Special thanks are due to the WSD Facilities Planning Team for their time and dedication for improving the learning and life skills of those who attend WSD and for those who receive services from WSD. The Planning Team members are:

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Executive Summary

The Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) has the unique responsibility in the State of Washington for providing education and services to Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners, their families, and their home communities. WSD is unequalled in the State for providing a learning community environment where learners can communicate directly through the use of American Sign Language (ASL) with one another and with the teachers and staff without the use of interpreters.

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners are often not afforded the opportunity of direct communication or participation in traditional school-age activities of drama, student leadership, sports, journalism, and community service projects in hearing schools. Through the learning community atmosphere, the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners not only receive an education, but also learn the skills necessary to succeed in life, career, and community roles. Integration occurs through involvement with local public schools, community college and country skills training center.

The Governor and State Legislature have started a phased funding process to renovate and replace the aging physical facilities at WSD. The facilities will be designed to support the evolving responsibilities of the school. A Learning Plan was developed to guide the School's program evolution and to inform the design process.

Purpose of the Learning Plan

The purpose of the Learning Plan is to bridge from the Strategic Plan of WSD and the Predesign of the campus facilities to the design process of the new and renovated campus facilities. The physical learning environment is a key component in effective learning and must be designed in a way that supports and enhances the learning strengths of WSD today and the future.

The Facilities Planning Team helped define guiding principles relating to learning at the WSD. The principles address the following key issues for programmatic outcomes and teaching/learning techniques that WSD facilities must support:

Key Issues

- Ensure that all learners at the WSD achieve or exceed the learning expectations identified by the Facilities Planning Team. Support the achievement of the learning expectations through the use of team-teaching, combination of formal and informal learning, residential, and extra-curricular activities.
- Use integrated and spiral curriculum through all educational levels to increase coherency of subject matter and prepare learners with necessary life skills.
- Increase the use of project- and community-based learning processes and activities to provide learners with knowledge and skills to be self-assured and self-sufficient in the hearing world, and in their careers and communities.

- Reorganize staff, decision-making, and time frames to support the learning goals of the students, improve communication among staff, and increase efficiency and accountability.
- Create a lifelong learning system for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, their families, teachers, communities, and agency personnel by developing a larger and coordinated Outreach Program.
- Become the lead agency in the State of Washington to explore, test, use, and provide training for the use of innovative, assisted hearing technologies; and to provide training for educators and agency personnel who work with the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing.
- Design a physical environment that supports and enhances the following:
 - preparation of Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners to be productive members in work, family, and community life in the hearing world
 - achievement of identified learning expectations for subject matter, and career and life skills
 - creation of a learning community, within WSD and with the external community
 - use of direct communication in all campus activities
 - reorganization of staff, decision-making, subjects, learning processes, and time frames
 - inclusion of learning and assisted hearing technologies
 - use of the administrative spaces, facilities, and grounds as learning tools
 - ability to adapt to changing needs and practices of WSD
 - Integration into the larger community



Introduction

The mission of Washington School for the Deaf (WSD), a state agency which was founded in 1886, is to provide education for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing learners up to age 21. Currently, WSD is committed to serve 3,500 deaf or hard-of-hearing learners throughout the state through a residential program and an outreach program.

The Washington State Legislature provided funds in 1997 to build three new residential cottages, and to conduct a facilities assessment. The assessment indicated that only the new residential cottages, Clarke Hall, and Lloyd Auditorium met structural and safety codes. The educational facilities were not capable of supporting and enhancing the use of American Sign Language and other learning processes needed to prepare the learners for the 21st century, including the use of technology. Renovations were begun for Clarke Hall and a Campus Master Plan was completed in 1999.

A Strategic Plan (1999-2005) was developed for the purpose of:

- articulating the school's mission,
- analyzing external opportunities and threats,
- examining internal strengths and weaknesses, and
- agreeing on appropriate action.

Based on the Strategic Plan and the Campus Master Plan, a Predesign document was prepared in 2000 to show a multi-phase redevelopment of the WSD campus, with the obsolete facilities being replaced by the 2007-09 biennium. A consultant was hired to facilitate the planning and development of a Learning Plan for WSD. A Facilities Planning Team was convened in February, 2001 and finished its work in June, 2001. The Learning Plan is based on the following statements of mission, vision, and goals for WSD:

Mission of Washington School for the Deaf

Provide a linguistically, culturally, and socially accessible learning environment in which learners are prepared to succeed in a changing world.

Value Statement of Washington School for the Deaf

Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners can meet the same educational challenges as learners with normal hearing, and are valued as equal participants in our society.

Vision of Washington School for the Deaf

Provide on-site and outreach instruction and services that offer learners an equal opportunity to meet the standards set for all K-12 education in the Washington State Essential Learnings, by the State of Washington's Commission on Academic Excellence. The Essential Learnings are:

- Read with comprehension, write with skill and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings.

- Think analytically, logically, and creatively and integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgements and solve problems.
- Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history; arts; and health and fitness.
- Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions affect future career and educational opportunities.

Vision Goals

- Serve as the primary resource to all 6,000 to 9,000 members of the State of Washington's Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community.
- Provide comprehensive educational and training programs, both on-campus and in the community at large.
- Expand the Outreach Program to improve employment and life skills for the Deaf and the Hard-of-Hearing.
- Provide consultation to teachers of the deaf; testing of learners in public schools; support and education for families of deaf children; use of innovative applications of technology; and training for educators, interpreters, and social service professionals

Strategic Plan Priorities:

Academic Excellence	All Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing students will be afforded the opportunity to meet or exceed the State's educational standards as defined by the Washington State Essential Learning.
Outreach	Create an outreach program, which supports the educational needs of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children in Washington State.
Funding	Maximize our ability to assess funding sources in order to accomplish the goals of WSD and meet the needs of our learners.
Staffing	WSD personnel will promote a culturally appropriate communication environment.
Community Collaboration	Establish internal and external partnerships that support student learning, shared community resources, and increased educational opportunities.
Technology	Ensure that WSD has and utilizes current and emerging technologies for education and school operations.

Learner/Staff Communication

All deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing staff, and all learners and parents will be afforded the opportunity to have clear and concise communication.

New Designs Planning Process

The WSD Facilities Planning Team followed the New Designs Planning Process, developed by Dr. George H. Copa, of Oregon State University, which has been used nationally and internationally for educational planning at K-12, postsecondary, and university levels. Each element aligns with, and builds upon the previous elements. The process elements include:

New Designs Planning Process:

Learning Context
Learning Audience
Learning Signature
Learning Expectations
Learning Process
Learning Partnerships
Learning Organization
Learning Staff and Staff
Development
Learning Environment
Learning Finance
Learning Accountability
Learning Celebration

To guide the development of the Learning Plan for WSD, the Planning Team addressed the Learning Context, Audience, Signature, Expectations, Process, Organization, and Environment.

Learning Context

Development of the learning context includes defining the assets, opportunities, challenges, and aspirations of WSD. Assets include what is working well at WSD. Opportunities include what could WSD be doing, but is not taking advantage of. Challenges include what is keeping WSD from taking advantage of the opportunities. Aspirations include what the WSD wants to provide.

The Planning Team confirmed the most important features of the Learning Context for Washington School for the Deaf as:

- **Provide attractive and safe living spaces** – Provide up-to-date, comfortable, home-like, and safe living spaces that also serve as informal learning spaces. These spaces can be used to practice homemaking and family living skills. The spaces need to support applied learning experiences.
- **Design and build new physical learning environments** – Replace the existing learning facilities with a learning environment that supports and enhances the learning expectations and outcomes for all learners (including the residential learners, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, community members, and the larger hearing impaired and deaf community). Ensure sufficient space in the design for an increased residential enrollment as well as space for new audiences. Plan for and house local, regional, and state agencies that provide services for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing onsite.
- **Embrace new ways of thinking and new habits** – Change existing views and patterns of thinking and acting regarding WSD; what the school provides for learners at the local, regional, state, national, and global levels; and how WSD delivers quality learning experiences and services. Provide English, American Sign Language (ASL), Speech Training, Audiological Support and when appropriate, other native language training. Effectively incorporate our own administrative areas, maintenance/plant facilities, and grounds and staff for quality learning experiences.
- **Encourage a wide variety of teaching practices including team teaching** – Support the existing teaching teams and provide staffing and staff development to adopt a variety of teaching methodologies and assessment of learning.
- **Provide a strong commitment to the learners** – Identify all learners across the life span that WSD can impact in a positive way, and identify the learning expectations for those learners. Provide quality learning experiences that prepare the learners to have careers, and to be active and productive members of their families and communities.



- **Develop continual staff development opportunities** – Recognize the commitment and willingness to embrace change by providing staff development opportunities that focus on the current research and best practices in providing the best learning and living experiences for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing community.
- **Build strong relationships with parents, alumni, and the community** – Identify the strengths, interests, and needs of parents, alumni, and community members and provide rich opportunities for these audiences to be actively involved in the learning and living processes. Develop partnerships with local, regional, and state agencies that can provide services from WSD. These agencies can assist with the development of information and referral services.
- **Create effective and active partnerships** – Build partnerships with business and industry, community agencies, and other learning providers to: (a) bring relevancy to the learning experience and assessment of learning; (b) increase accountability to the learners, parents, legislators, and the governor; and (c) seek sustainability through providing innovative services and creating a variety of revenue sources. Begin the exploration and development of career and technical skills for the elementary and middle school levels on-site and partner with the Clark County Vocational Skills Center to provide hands-on training for learners at the high school level.
- **Embrace the concept of becoming a resource center** – Use existing expertise and new knowledge and skills of the staff and learners to provide learning and training for parents, other learning providers, community agency personnel, and employers. Capitalize on WSD's unique strengths (e.g., provide closed captioning and other services for the community at large; offer training for those who employ, work with, or live with the hard-of-hearing or deaf; form hearing assessment teams to go off-site to provide consultation services; and provide outreach services to families). Address systems for dissemination of information and delivery of services. Plan and implement a new marketing strategy for the School.

Learning Audience

The Planning Team confirmed the learning audience to be served by WSD as:

- Parents of the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing
- Birth to age 21 residential and day learners
- WSD faculty and staff
- Community at large to include other professionals, para-professionals, and agency personnel who provide services to the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing
- Home school districts of the learners
- Outreach to the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing who are not in residence or who do not live in the Vancouver area
- Alumni

- Partners who are other K-12 schools, Clark College, WSUV, community agencies
- Legislature and Governor
- Media

Currently, the residential learners are fairly transitory throughout the year and from year to year. The turnover in enrollment impacts the development of learning expectations for each student, achievement of the expectations, evaluation of which learning processes will be most effective, and how teachers and staff are organized to deliver the living and learning experiences.

Learning Signature

The learning signature was defined by what makes WSD unique or special, and may include a (a) visual image; (b) story; (c) phrase; and/or (d) historically significant object or person. The Planning Team worked with this concept and the following themes emerged that could serve as the signature of WSD:

- Illustrating direct communication through the use of American Sign Language
- Providing direct access to the world through communication
- Providing residential educational facility
- Giving hope to our learners and their families
- Celebrating the history and culture of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- Bringing the Hearing, Hard-of-Hearing, and Deaf together
- Integrating with pride and sense of self

Learning Expectations

The Planning Team identified the following learning expectations for all learners of WSD, and for professionals and paraprofessionals working with the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing and the:

- Attaining high-level skills for communicating with deaf and hearing persons
- Demonstrating fluency in English, ASL, Speech, Listening Skills, and where applicable, the learner's own native language
- Using hands-on problem-solving skills for both academic and career and technical education for 21st century careers
- Demonstrating independent living skills and preparation for self-sufficiency
- Giving unselfishly to others and the community
- Achieving or exceeding required Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) and the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS)
- Understanding of deaf culture, language, and identity including history, literature, and art that is specific to the deaf
- Demonstrating behavioral and social skills as effective citizens

Learning expectations for paraprofessionals and professionals seeking learning and training at WSD are:

- Having the ability to communicate in English and ASL
- Understanding of deaf culture, language, and identity including history, literature, and art specific to the deaf



Learning Process

The learning process provides multiple pathways to achieve the learning expectations of WSD learners, engages the learners in discovery and application of knowledge and skills, and prepares the learners in life and career skills. By using appropriate learning processes to achieve the learning expectations, the post-graduate or 5th year programs may not need to expand. The Facilities Planning Team described the learning process at WSD as follows:

- Learning will occur for all learners of WSD primarily through active learning processes and direct communication and secondarily, through integrated curriculum and team-teaching.

Learning Organization

Learning is organized by learners, time, environment, subjects, decision-making, and staffing. Organization of learning supports: (a) the achievement and assessment of the learning expectations, (b) learning process(es), (c) learner success in attaining career and life skills, and (d) the learning staff. The Facilities Planning Team discussed these issues, but this is an area that needs further, all-staff discussion and development.

The organization of **learners** can be by day students, residential students, outreach students, age level, academic ability level, and hearing ability level.

The organization of **time** refers to supporting flexibility in time scheduling and can range from the traditional Monday through Friday, 9am to 3pm, 50 minute class periods to learning occurring seven days a week, day and evening, formal and informal activities, and longer blocks of time.

The organization of the **environment** refers to learning being provided in multiple and flexible learning settings both on the WSD campus and at other sites. As the Team discussed the organization of staff and decision making, the impact on how the environment might be organized began to emerge in the following ways:

- The team wants to review current job functions and determine the most efficient physical location for each function.
- The infrastructure/mechanical room could be used as a learning tool for the mechanical program.
- The team recommended that more flexible times be available for taking elective courses throughout the week.
- The team discussed the need for more "down-time" for the learners after a full day of academic learning.
- The team wondered if the academics and electives could be scheduled throughout the morning, afternoon, and evening—rather than academics all day and electives after the academics or in the evenings.
- The team looked at the task of organizing the environment in the following two ways: (a) what spaces are needed and (b) what spaces do we not need to replace?

Spaces that are needed:

- Student center
- Student government office
- Residential advisor office should be located for convenient access by parents, especially during evening hours, and in a location that provides added security for students.
- Informal spaces for learners to have conversations among themselves
- Space to teach ASL to our own learners and those seeking training in ASL
- Space to teach spoken English

Spaces that do not need to be built:

- Vocational spaces, because partnerships could be arranged with other schools.

Subjects can be organized in the traditional singular subject offerings, or can be integrated between subject disciplines; integrated between academic, career and technical education, and developmental education; multi-age learning communities; and by active learning processes such as project- or community-based learning.

Decision-making can be through centralized, traditional hierarchical methods or through shared leadership and responsibility. The Planning Team recognized that

staff communication is an area that needs improvement and could be enhanced through integration of the educational, extracurricular, and residential staff and programs.

The Team addressed the need for all staff to take responsibility for providing leadership and better communication; ownership of roles and responsibilities; and dispersed leadership and decision-making.

The **learning staff** can be organized by subject matter expertise; age level of the learners; by certified and classified staff; administrative, teaching, or support staff; or organized by teams that provide a personalized or team learning experience for the learners. The current staffing levels and organization makes it difficult for the educational, extracurricular, and residential staff to present a coordinated effort for the learners.

The Facilities Planning Team recognized that with the current and continued increase in outreach activities, and services and linkages to the community that the learning staff needs to be reorganized to better coordinate and support these activities. The activities could become a revenue stream to do cost recovery and meeting additional needs or reinvest in current programs. Coordination of events and facilities would be done in cooperation with the Outreach Program and the Business and Maintenance Departments, and would include the following tasks:

- Scheduling training events
- Scheduling community events
- Scheduling facilities, AV/media, technology, and transportation
- Coordinating continuing education activities
- Coordinating interagency activities
- Arranging for security
- Providing events communication and publicity
- Coordinating grant writing and development efforts
- Coordinating contracts

Learning Environment

The Facilities Planning Team's efforts in identifying the learning context, audience, signature, expectations, process, and organization clarified the need to design a campus that:

- Prepares all learners to contribute to life and career opportunities,
- Integrates subjects and age levels,
- Supports and enhances project- and community-based learning
- Directs appropriate learning activities that require specialized equipment or facilities to other learning settings,
- Encourages integration of the deaf and hearing cultures through multiple use facilities,
- Celebrates the unique qualities of the deaf community, such as its history and culture,
- Enhances multi-age learning and residential communities,

- Supports direct communication that occurs through the use of American Sign Language,
- Provides Speech Training and Audiological Support
- Provides access to multiple technologies for learning and support of the staff,
- Provides opportunities for the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing learners to participate in life and extracurricular activities, and
- Inspires the learning staff to provide quality learning and life skills opportunities.



Recommendations

The Facilities Planning Team met seven times to prepare the Learning Plan for WSD and held one all-staff meeting to seek broader input into the process. It is the facilitator's recommendation that the Superintendent of WSD hold a review session of the Plan with the decision-making committees of the school followed by an all-staff meeting to disseminate the Learning Plan. Specific areas to be discussed and agreed upon are:

- Design a campus to serve approximately 125 residential learners, 75 day learners, and to provide evening and weekend training sessions for parents, and community professionals and paraprofessionals
- Design a campus that supports and enhances current learning activities and stays viable and usable in the context of the changing needs of the Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing communities and new learning and medical technologies
- Provide on-going staff development opportunities
- Design the facilities to support team teaching and project- and community-based learning processes.
- Organize the learners and the learning process using the following methods:
 - Create a K-12 learning community
 - Integrate academic, career and technical education, developmental education, and life skills preparation
 - Continue spiral curriculum
 - Combine formal learning with extracurricular activities
 - Use both team-based and individual instruction

- Use project- and community-based learning to provide opportunities for learning and experiencing the hearing world
- Organize learning time to:
 - Extend learning hours Monday through Thursday and have Fridays as travel days for the residential learners
 - Use the Friday through Sunday time frame for providing workshops and training opportunities for families, agencies, and other educational providers
 - Use Fridays for extended support service time for the day learners
 - Hold classes 8am to 5pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and use Mondays and Wednesdays for a combination of class and work experience
 - Move to a year around, 12-month program.
 - Organize by assessment and achievement of learning expectations rather than by the number of hours of "seat time"
- Design programs and activities that integrate hard-of-hearing and deaf language, history, art, and culture with that of the hearing world
- Reorganize the learning staff to:
 - Use team teaching to improve coordination, communication, and learning achievement
 - Improve coordination of activities, services, and linkages within WSD and with the community
 - Increase expectation that additional revenue will be generated through training and services provided to communities, other education providers, and service agencies and that the revenue will support existing and new programs and technologies
 - Encourage shared leadership, decision-making, and accountability



NEXT STEP

Design Process

The Design Team, which consists of WSD, SRG Partnership and its consultants, will continue the process of exploring the unique learning environment of WSD by conducting exploration workshops. This interactive process tests the notions of classrooms, group and individual spaces to understand how the deaf use a variety of space, building, and campus configurations.